

Humming-Birds met with, but both were "common." *Cathartes aura* was found "everywhere." Dippers (*Cinclus mexicanus*) were "very common." Of *Chamaea fasciata* a few were met with "in the bush."

88. *Van Oort on the Osteology of the Tail in Birds.*

[Beitrag zur Osteologie der Vogelschwanzes. Inaugural-Dissertation des philosophischen Fakultät des Universität Bern zur Erlangung der Doctorwürde. By Dr. Eduard Daniël Van Oort in Leiden. 143 pp., 5 pls.]

We are glad to have an opportunity of noticing this careful paper by Dr. van Oort on the Osteology of the Tail in Birds, though it is impossible in our restricted space to do justice to the details, which must be left for study to the individual reader. Not only does the author give us the results of his own work upon the rich collection of skeletons in the Leyden Museum, but he also furnishes us with a compendium of the researches of former writers on the subject, and adds a discussion upon the relationships of the various families as shown by the formation of the tail, drawing conclusions favourable to the more modern Classifications. Special sections are devoted to fossil and to recent birds, Ratite and Carinate, to the embryo of certain species, to the rectrices, and so forth; while a table is given of the number of vertebrae in each family and in representative species. Moreover, we observe throughout statements of the number of rectrices, which we have often endeavoured (and failed) to find elsewhere in particular cases.

XXXII.—*Obituary.*

EDWARD CAVENDISH TAYLOR and LEONARD HOWARD IRBY.

EDWARD CAVENDISH TAYLOR, one of the original members of the British Ornithologists' Union, was born on the 20th of January, 1831, the third and youngest son of Frederic Farmer Taylor, of Chyknell in the county of Salop, by his

marriage with Juliana, daughter of the second Lord Waterpark. He was educated at Rugby and Cambridge, and, after the usual course of theological study, took Holy Orders in the Church of England, and served as curate in several places, amongst which was Long Compton in Warwickshire. But Taylor was not thoroughly devoted to his profession, and when, in 1870, the Act was passed enabling clergymen of the Church of England to give up their Orders, he took early advantage of it and retired into lay life and the study of birds, in which he had always taken a great interest from his early youth. Taylor was a very accurate and painstaking observer, besides making excellent skins, and was a constant traveller. In the winter of 1853 he visited Egypt, and ascended the Nile up to the First Cataract, making a good collection of birds *en route*. In 1858, when this Union was founded he became one of its original members, and, though he was not present at the meeting at Cambridge in November, 1858, when 'The Ibis' was founded, he contributed an excellent article to the first number of this journal, which was published in January 1859.

Early in 1859 Taylor left England on an expedition to Tunis and Algeria, in company with Selater and two other friends. The main object of the party was to visit the breeding-sites of the Vultures and Eagles in those countries, which had been so successfully explored by Salvin and Tristram in 1857, as is recorded in the first volume of this journal. No opportunity was lost by Taylor of adding to his cabinet of birds during this expedition. His next long journey was of a more adventurous character. Leaving England in December, 1872, he proceeded to the West Indies, and besides made excursions from Trinidad to the mainland of South America, visiting, amongst other places, the towns of Ciudad Bolivar and Caracas. Birds were studied and collected at all the places visited, and the general results of the expedition were given to the world in two articles published in 'The Ibis' in 1864. Examples of *Pitangus taylori*, a species of Tyrant-bird named by Selater after his friend and companion, were first obtained on this

occasion in Porto Rico, and serve to commemorate the name of its discoverer.

After 1860 Taylor's headquarters were always in London, where he had a set of rooms in Jernyn Street and was a member of several clubs. The winter-climate of London, however, did not suit his health, and the colder months of the year were usually passed in Italy, where he was quite at home both at Florence and Rome, and enjoyed the society of numerous friends. He also re-visited Egypt more than once, and never failed to give some account of his observations on birds made during these excursions to the Editors of 'The Ibis,' at the same time never omitting to add to his cabinet of birds. When in London in the summer he was a constant visitor to the Zoological Society's Library and Gardens, and to the Bird-room of the British Museum, always intent upon questions relating to the study of Birds. During the last part of his life Taylor's health unfortunately failed him, and he was not so much seen at his favourite places of resort. The end came somewhat suddenly, when he died in London on April 19th at the age of 73 years. By his will Taylor left his collection of birds and eggs to the British Museum, where it will prove to be a valuable accession, as several types are comprised in the series and the skins are all in excellent condition and labelled with well-established localities.

Taylor's collection contains 1226 specimens of birds and 860 of eggs, principally from the Palæarctic and Neotropical Regions. Amongst them are the types of *Pitangus taylori* and *Tyrannus rostratus*, both shot and skinned by himself.

The following is a list of the titles of Taylor's principal ornithological papers:—

1. Ornithological Reminiscences of Egypt. *Ibis*, 1859, p. 41.
2. Five Months in the West Indies. Part I.: *Ibis*, 1864, p. 73. Part II.: *ibid.* p. 157.
3. Egypt Revisited. *Ibis*, 1867, p. 48.
4. A few additional Notes on the Birds of Egypt. *Ibis*, 1878, p. 368.
5. Ornithological Notes from Egypt and Athens. *Ibis*, 1886, p. 378.
6. Ornithological Notes from Constantinople. By P. L. Sclater and E. C. Taylor. *Ibis*, 1876, p. 60.

7. A few Notes on the Birds of Egypt, from Observations made at Cairo in the Months of January and February 1896. *Ibis*, 1896, p. 477.
8. Notes on the Eggs of the Frigate Bird and Crocodile of Jamaica. *P. Z. S.* 1858, p. 318.

Besides these Taylor was the author of the following letters addressed to the Editors of this journal:—

- On Egyptian Birds. *Ibis*, 1860, p. 199.
- On the Occurrence of *Turtur risorius* in Europe. *Ibis*, 1864, p. 410.
- On *Aquila cullenii*. *Ibis*, 1880, p. 143.
- On the Occurrence of *Coccyzus americanus* in Italy. *Ibis*, 1884, p. 114.
- On *Coccyzus americanus* and *Porphyrio alleni* in Italy. *Ibis*, 1884, p. 214.
- On Birds observed during a Visit to Egypt. *Ibis*, 1891, p. 473.
- On the Crow of Somaliland. *Ibis*, 1891, p. 628.

Lieut.-Colonel LEONARD HOWARD LOYD IRBY, who died on May 14th, 1905, at 14 Cornwall Terrace, Regent's Park, N.W., was the fourth son of the late Rear-Admiral the Hon. Frederick Paul Irby, C.B., R.N., the second son of the second Lord Boston. He was born in 1836 and was educated at Rugby. On May 5th, 1854, he was gazetted as Ensign in the 90th Light Infantry, and six months later proceeded with it to the Crimea. He served at the siege of Sebastopol throughout the terrible winter of 1854-55, receiving the medal and clasp and Turkish medal, and was promoted Captain, February 24th, 1857. Two years later upon troops being dispatched to China, the 90th L.I. were ordered thither. Three companies—Capt. Garnet Wolseley's (now Field-Marshal Viscount Wolseley), Capt. Irby's, and another—sailed in H.M. Troopship 'Transit' on April 8th, 1857.

On the voyage out the vessel was wrecked in the Straits of Banca, near Sumatra, and became a total loss. The British soldiers were landed on a small island adjacent to the scene of the wreck, and after ten days the 'Dove' gunboat arrived, bringing the startling news of the great Sepoy Rebellion, and further orders that the 90th, in place of continuing the voyage to China, were to go to Calcutta. Thither the regiment proceeded, *viâ* Singapore, arriving on August 11th, 1857. From Calcutta they made a forced march of some 700 miles to Cawnpore, arriving there whilst

evidences of the terrible massacre were yet visible on all sides. Here Irby came in for a great deal of fighting, his "record" including the relief of Lucknow under Lord Clyde, the defence of the Alum Bagh under Outram, and the siege and fall of Lucknow.

From his earliest days Irby had been profoundly interested in natural history and his diary of his voyage in the 'Transit,' and of the following months of incessant marching and fighting in India, is interspersed everywhere with entries relating to the birds and other animals which he had shot or seen.

Lord Wolseley, in his 'Story of a Soldier's Life,' makes frequent allusions to Irby's well-known tastes, and describes several amusing scenes which occurred. Thus, when on board the 'Transit,' Wolseley, who occupied a cabin along with Irby, writes: "A few days after we left the Cape, I remarked a horrible smell in our cabin, and upon sniffing about I found it came from the skin of a Wild Cat carefully pinned upon a board to dry. In my anger I threw it overboard . . ."

Another entry is highly characteristic of Irby's ways. Lord Wolseley, describing the life at the Alum Bagh, says: "There were some jeels where my old chum Irby, an unerring shot, managed often to pick up a few Wild Duck. He had a curious soldier-servant whom he had trained as a retriever, and no matter how deep the water was where the duck fell, he quickly brought it to his master."

For his services in the Mutiny, Captain Irby received the medal with two clasps and was granted "a Year's Service." After the suppression of the Mutiny, he remained in India until his return to England in September 1860. On June 2nd, 1864, he was promoted to be Major in the 90th, and in October 1864 he exchanged into the 74th Highlanders. In 1868 he proceeded with his new Regiment to Gibraltar, and served there until February 4th, 1871, when he accepted promotion to a half-pay Lieut.-Colonelcy. Three years later he retired from the Service.

Irby's devotion to the study of Natural History never failed him, even in the most adverse circumstances. Before

Sebastopol he managed in brief intervals when off duty to shoot and skin a variety of birds at the head of Balaclava Harbour and other localities within the extremely limited region accessible to the British Army engaged in the siege. Visitors to his house will recall, among these, a Great White Heron and a Bittern obtained there. It can easily be imagined that India opened up a wide field for his energies and researches. It was not, however, until 1868, when he first went to Gibraltar, that he came across a field which he was destined to make largely his own. At this time our knowledge of the birds of the Spanish Peninsula was extremely limited, and what was then known was mainly due to Lord Lilford, who had visited the country on several occasions and had contributed papers on its birds to the 'Ibis' in 1865 and 1866. It was a happy chance that the two had been most intimate friends from pre-Crimean days in Dublin.

Major Irby now devoted much time to a thorough study of the birds of S.W. Andalucia and of the opposite coast of Barbary. He had, however, at this time, and indeed throughout his life, an invincible objection to publishing any account of his experiences, and it was largely due to Lord Lilford that he was at last induced to set about his book on the Ornithology of the Straits of Gibraltar, which, together with Lord Lilford's work, has formed the basis of nearly all the writings on the subject which have since appeared.

This book came out in 1875 and is full of valuable information, much of which was at the time entirely new, on the fauna of this region.

Colonel Irby was a man of marked individuality, and at all times most willing to give assistance and information to those whom he viewed as genuine students of Natural History, but he had an undisguised detestation of the race of "collectors" and wanton destroyers of bird-life. The present writer will never forget the outpour of indignation by Colonel Irby upon the owner of a private collection who exhibited with pride whole trays-full of Choughs' and Peregrines' eggs, in the collection of which entire districts

had been mercilessly harried and the beautiful and harmless Cough practically exterminated—at least in one locality. Colonel Irby's wrath against such men was a thing not to be forgotten, and he always declaimed against the baneful habit of private collectors aiming at securing "British specimens" of birds or eggs.

Another characteristic trait of Colonel Irby was his strongly expressed contempt for that class of naturalists, unfortunately not infrequently met with nowadays, who appropriate the information obtained from others, usually of wider experience and knowledge, and embody the same in their writings and books without any acknowledgment.

It was this deep-seated feeling which in later years often made him loth to write on matters of unquestionable interest, especially to ornithologists, for he argued that to do so would be but to supply further material for unscrupulous book-makers!

It was whilst he was smarting under treatment of this sort, that Lord Lilford and the present writer were, happily, successful in inducing Colonel Irby to bring out an enlarged Second Edition of his admirable 'Ornithology of the Straits of Gibraltar.' Lord Lilford supplied the fine coloured plates which make so attractive a part of the book, while the present writer gave his own notes on Southern Spain, covering the period 1874–1894, as well as sundry illustrations, which were duly incorporated and acknowledged in the most generous manner. This work will probably remain the standard authority on the Birds of S.W. Andalusia for an indefinite time.

It has sometimes been said that Colonel Irby failed to record certain species which have since been proved to occur in the districts described. This is to some extent true, but is the best testimony to the accuracy and thoroughness of his work; for he would never admit species into his lists unless fully convinced personally as to their absolute authenticity. In sundry "Lists of Birds observed" published in recent years it would have been well if Colonel Irby's views on this point had been adopted. He never ceased to make scathing

allusions to the marvellous powers claimed by some individuals "who profess to identify all and every species within the range of their vision, even to distinguish a Common from a Lesser Kestrel at any distance when seen from a passing train"!

An invaluable work to Students of Ornithology in these Islands is Colonel Irby's 'British Birds Key-List,' which he wrote in 1887-88, and a Second Edition of which appeared in 1892.

As is well known, he had exceptionally strong views on the subject of what he ever described as "the needless multiplication of species," and denounced the same in no uncertain language. Of this he once wrote:—"The unfortunate part of ornithology, as at the present practised, is that it is chiefly confined to the slaughter of birds, whose skins, when compared and examined by table naturalists, are, upon the slightest variation of plumage, made into a new species without any knowledge of their habits, notes, &c."

As a Member of the Zoological Society of London Irby took a keen interest in the management of the Gardens and served on the Council from 1892 to 1900. Many of the beautiful Life-groups of Birds and their nests at the British Museum of Natural History, Cromwell Road, were obtained by Colonel Irby, some of the earliest having been taken in 1884.

The present writer first made Colonel Irby's acquaintance when quartered at Gibraltar in May 1877, exactly twenty-eight years ago, and from that time, and indeed until within a few weeks of his decease, he made numerous expeditions with him in Southern Spain, as well as to many of the wilder portions of the British Isles. Added to his thorough acquaintance with all appertaining to bird-life, Colonel Irby had a considerable knowledge of Lepidopterous Insects and of Plants. A most interesting and amusing companion, he was also a warm-hearted and staunch friend, whose quaint habits and forcible sayings will long be remembered by all who knew him.

(WILLOUGHBY VERNER.)